

Geographic Review Panel 3 – American River/Eastside Tribes

Proposal number: 2001-K220

Short Proposal Title: Reintroduction of Native Salmonids into Central Valley

1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region. The project applicant proposes to assess the efficacy of opening up once available spawning and rearing habitat to Central Valley native salmonids. A topic perpetually discussed, but never rigorously evaluated. The proposal is directly applicable to CALFED ERP and CVPIA goals of restoring at-risk anadromous fish, and has high relevance to the region.

2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region. The proposed work complements CALFED ERP and the CVPIA-funded restoration and improvement projects as related to steelhead and spring run salmon populations. Secondly, the proposed work will supplement the planning and analysis activities of the CALFED Fish Passage Improvement Program focused on river reaches downstream of valley rim dams.

3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner. In concept the project is entirely feasible. However, the project applicant needs to address several significant elements before an assessment of project success and timeliness can be made. Particularly the questionable assumption that a variety of necessary data have been collected and will be accessible by literature survey (see additional comments below, item 6).

4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project. The project team is well qualified to implement the proposed work. Team members include professional planners, biologists and engineers with specific knowledge of California water issues, Central Valley anadromous salmonids, and fish passage design

5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance). The process for outreach is well defined.

Environmental compliance is not applicable.

6. Cost. The \$300,000 requested seems reasonable for the scope of work proposed. However, the panel thinks the project proponent has skated over three significant elements that will need to be clearly addressed if the final assessment is to have any meaning. Specifically:

- It's unclear whether the project means to evaluate passage around rather than through the reservoir pools. If they intend to evaluate passage through the reservoirs, then an assessment of the downstream passage of juvenile salmonids through warm water reservoirs stocked with salmonid predators needs to be included in their evaluation.

- The project applicant is focused on passage at valley rim dams, although there is an extensive series of small stair-step dams and reservoirs in the watersheds of each of the rivers identified for evaluation. There's no purpose to assessing movement of fishes above valley rim dams if no consideration is given to the barriers (dams and highly regulated flows) that they'll encounter immediately upstream of the reservoir.
- The project applicant assumes that data exists on the availability and quality of salmonid habitat upstream of the valley rim dams, and that this data can be surveyed through literature searches. This is unlikely.

If these elements are buried in the existing budget, then the proposed work is likely under budgeted, and the project timeline of 18 months is likely to not be long enough.

If the project applicant doesn't intend to address these issues, then the scope of work isn't broad enough to be meaningful.

7. Cost sharing. None.

8. Additional comments. None.

Regional Ranking

Panel Ranking: Medium high

Provide a brief explanation of your ranking: The proposed work will provide insight into the perpetually discussed topic of the feasibility of reintroducing anadromous fishes to their historic habitat upstream of major valley dams. The information is also likely to be a valuable decision-making tool in future discussions of dam removal projects.

Recommend the proposal receive full CALFED support contingent upon the following:

- That scope of work addresses the three elements noted above in (6) Costs, and that
- Project applicant demonstrates that the existing budget either provides for these elements or that appropriate adjustments can be made such that the budget will accommodate these elements.